cution of brasses, and the numbers which still remain:—"It is obvious," says he, "that brasses were not always the work of local artists, and that their designing and execution were in the hands of a few persons. When we consider the numbers required, and the condition of the sister arts, it is also not improbable that those who were employed in their production formed a guild, originally perhaps composed of foreigners; and 'that the same minds which designed the architectural structures of the middle ages also designed the sepulchral monuments.'* Brasses are now found in far greater number in England than in any other part of Europe. The whole number still remaining here is probably not less than four thousand, and traces of as many more, which are now destroyed, may be found. On the Continent, the specimens are far from numerous; some fine examples exist in the churches of St. Sauveur, Notre Dame, and the Cathedral, Bruges;—a late mural one remains at St. Bavon, Ghent, and it is not unlikely that several might be discovered in the country churches in Belgium. In France, very few seem to have survived the revolution. One of the fifteenth century is in Amiens Cathedral. Some are to be seen at the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle; Meissen, and Constance, and in other parts of Germany. One fine example from Seville, in Spain, is described in the latter portion of this volume. There are a few in Funchal Cathedral, Madeira, and in Denmark there are known to have existed some of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Italy is entirely without them; but some incised slabs are to be found at Rome.

Most of the brasses in England are found in the counties on its eastern side, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent. Many are to be seen in Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, and Sussex; but in the western and northern counties they are more rare."

We must postpone the remainder of our budget of books, that we may have space to mention a proposal for the establishment of a society for the publication of architectural knowledge, which bids fair to supply a great want.

The causes of the formation of this society are chiefly the three following facts:—

1. The want, in the English language, of a work which can faithfully represent itself as a dictionary of architecture.

2. The necessities frequently experienced, on the part of students, for such an aid to their labours, which are obstructed not only at the outset, but often to the termination of life, by the *rudis indigestaque moles* of materials which they hardly can find means to attack.

3. The regret at its absence from the library (which leaves a void of the greatest importance in the construction of a course of education), and the anxiety for the appearance of such a work, manifested by the senior practitioners, in whose hands is deposited the skill of future generations, and often urged by us. In 1845, Professor Cockerell said "he wished the body of English architects, taking the dictionary of Quatremère de Quincy as an example, would produce a perfect book upon the art, one man taking one part and one another part, so as to render it of the highest authority, of extreme use, and of a character to reflect such dignity and glory on all concerned, that he was anxious to see it commenced."

The projector of the association, Mr. Wyatt Papworth, thus sets forth what he considers it should undertake, as funds become available,—

"Republications of the works of the fathers of the art, after a careful collation of such MSS. as can be arrived at, and the earlier editions; so as to have editions of the standard authors, with their commentators, enriched with notes conveying the pith of modern discoveries and theories.

In 1610 an edition of Serlio was published, and several of Palladio, in English, followed: but none of the architectural classics have been published since, with the exception of Vitruvius. Fragments of Vasari have appeared, but not the complete work; which is to be regretted, as it deserves to be read generally, even if only in the recent French translation.

Publications or re-issues of executed works of authors of equivalent talent, who may not have left writings in MS. or type, or continuations of works in the same style.

Abstracts of translations of modern authors, with such illustrations and notes as may be needed, with memoirs and list of their works.

Publications of works (either of text or plates) by modern authors, English or foreign, which may be presented to and approved by the Society, or which may be assisted by contributing a portion of the funds for the sake of ensuring a place in the great work to a *brochure*, memoir, or essay, whose merits are acknowledged, but which might otherwise be published without uniformity.

Arrangements of the many valuable essays and hints which have appeared in the miscellanies of the last fifty years, as well as in those of the present day.

A digest of the theoretical books, arranging each division of an author's works under the appropriate article of the dictionary.

A polyglossary, or table of synonyms of technical words in the different languages.

The plan of operation will consist in the selection by the committee, or by the recommendations of the members, of a work or subject; by the mature digestion and revision of such contributions as may be forwarded to the editor; and the prompt publication, by the society, of such work under the inspection of the general editor, distinguishing the names of the parties from whom the articles have been obtained: thus, not an elementary work, trenching upon the province of the professional man, would be the result, but a series of papers, which would be essential to the 'Architect' in the fullest sense of the word."

The subscription is proposed to be one guinea per annum, for which three quarto volumes may be expected. There are difficulties in the way, not the least of which will be that of finding efficient editors willing to act gratuitously; but these may, and doubtless will, be overcome. We invite the co-operation of our readers, and anticipate for the new society, when formed, a long career of usefulness.

* "Waller's Brasses," Part X.

THE GAS MOVEMENT.

PROOFS OF RISE OF PROFITS WITH FALL IN PRICES, DRAWN FROM COMPANIES' OWN 'RETURNS.'

IN reverting, oftener than once, to the much less real than ostensible revelations of the gas house involved in that convenient and loosely ordered Parliamentary return, whereby the gas companies doubtless confidently hoped to frustrate the very end in view, and thus to retard the general movement onwards towards a vastly wider and cheaper diffusion of the benefits of gas-light, by exhibiting to the public and its legislative protectors an ostentatious but most fallacious display of *apparently* enormous outlays of 'fixed' or 'authorised' capital, and of comparatively low and moderate, or even occasionally pitiful dividends on *that* capital, to the cautious exclusion of the much less enormous capital *in reality called up* and outlaid or expended, and of which we almost uniformly fail to find the slightest notice, taken in the 'abstract of returns,' in which so capital a secret, all but universally, 'hides its *diminished* head' amongst the equally scarce and invisible 'bonuses,' with which it stands confessed to other eyes than those for whose behoof the abstract of return was rendered:—

In announcing, moreover, that the general rule of that return,—exhibited in the records of a slow and unwilling progress downwards in price, but upwards, as we anticipated, in prosperity,—appears to be, that as surely as the price is grumblingly and dilatorily reduced, so surely are the diffusion and the dividends proportionally increased; and, on the contrary, that as surely as a reduction of charges is resisted, or a retrogression made to higher, so surely are the diffusion and the dividends nipped in the bud;—we promised, after clearing the way by a gentle exposure of the intrinsic nature and value of the whole return, in other respects a mockery, a delusion, and a snare, to present a few of those details establishing the generality of the rule which really renders this return a *relatively* valuable and instructive one, though *absolutely* worthless and fallacious.

Such, therefore, is our present purpose; and if we can thereby convince (if we still, indeed, require to convince) the gas authorities, metropolitan and provincial, that *their* most *sterling* interests are identical with the most *enlightened* interests of every class of the community—even of the most humble who can at all afford to enlighten the physical darkness of their dwellings with even the most paltry rushlight, a class who are by far the most numerous, and hence by far the most important, humble though they be, as a general stay and support in the diffusion of any article adapted to really universal utility and consumpt, such as gas-light is,—and if we can thereby facilitate and hasten those immense reductions which not only *may*, but *must* and *will* be yet made almost everywhere in the present average price of gas—a price almost everywhere prohibitive as yet to its diffusion even amongst a tithe of the great mass of the people to whose benefit it is, when pure and cheap, an article of household economy so excellently well adapted,—then the object which we have so much at heart, for the promotion—for the wide-spread and universal diffusion—of so admirable an element of comfort, cheerfulness, convenience, morality, and cleanliness, shall have been happily attained. And, as already remarked, we do indeed believe that the more enlightened and more enterprising of the gas directors, now more alive to the right mode of promoting their own self-preservation and self-interest than they have been, will at length be triumphantly convinced, even by their own returns, that we were right in so long insisting on a steady, a rapid, and an immense reduction of price below the present average: so much so, indeed, that now at length they will clearly see that the sooner they come down to the level of the public expectation the better for themselves no less than for the public. In truth, as our more recent records of progress testify, not a few of them have already fairly entered, voluntarily, on the very path so often pointed out.

But as for the absolute or literal amount or limit of the dividends about to be quoted, we believe that quite enough has been said on previous occasions (*ante*, page 5 of present, and page 351 of last volume of THE BUILDER) to convince our readers that they constitute no criterion whatever of the actual amount of dividend on the capital *paid up*, and are only useful, as already said, as a proof of the relative advantage of largely diminishing the charges made for the article yielding the dividends, whatever these, in relation to mere outlay, may really amount to, even exclusive of those sterling bonuses which occasionally amount, as we have recently noticed, to at least 50 per cent. in addition to the nominal dividends, themselves in all probability worth in general at least another 50 per cent. more than their merely apparent value in the "Abstract of Returns."

The price of gas in general having been frequently declared by the advocates of monopoly to be one almost altogether regulated by, and dependant on, the price of coals, we shall incidentally take occasion to shew, from these returns, that so far from this being the case, immense reductions have over and over again been made, and yielded dividends of increasing value, while the price of coals either remained

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